

Points of the Compass in Brunei Malay.

The Points of the Compass in Brunei Malay have been discussed by Major J. C. Moulton in this Journal No. 83, 1921, p. 75.

The Serang of the s. l. *Brunei* explained the use of the word *Utara* as meaning N. E. by the fact that Malays fix the points of the compass by the winds; *Musim Utara* is the general Malay expression for the N. E. monsoon during which they cannot go out fishing, but if the wind shifts a point north they can, so they have a definite name for this: *Iraga*. And thus avoid confusion with the rightly dreaded *Utara*.

The coast of Borneo runs from S. W. to N. E., so a wind from the open sea i.e. *Angin Laut* would be a N. W. wind and a wind from the west would still be a sea wind *Barat Laut* i.e. from the western sea. The use of *Barat Tepat* for south west is probably a confusion of thought as such a wind would come straight (*tepat*) up the coast.

The other three winds are not sea winds; *Timor* the East is always definite; *Selatan* I don't think I ever heard used; the meaning given in Wilkinson is the wind from the side of the Straits not S. E.

Barat Daya for south might be explained by the meaning of *Daya*, treacherous, deceptive, as a wind partly off the shore would be.

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A Note on the Tagals of Sarawak.

The Tagals of whom a few hundred have wandered down into Sarawak territory from British Borneo are a stockily built tribe whose looks and ornaments, tattooing and headress are very similiar to some Dayak tribes. They are renowned amongst surrounding Muruts and others as experts in the art of poisoning. On one occasion I took from a small cloth which was round the neck of a Tagal chief a small piece of wood bound round with rotan and showed it to a Murut chief who asked me as he examined it from whom I had taken it. A native officer standing by mentioned the name of the Tagal chief whereupon the Murut dropped it like a piece of hot coal and nothing would induce him to touch it again. According to several Muruts this small piece of wood was quite sufficient to give a man violent fever.

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The Tagals in Sarawak have a very curious form of amusement called "Ungakang." In the middle of their long hoase verandahs there is a hole about 15 feet by 20 feet let down into the floor with loose spring boards at the bottom into which the young men jump. Then they gradually work up a higher speed, jumping up and down, singing "sembila kun mahor" meaning in Malay "Baik baik kita jalan." When there are sufficient men on the boards and the singing has been going on a while the women dressed in their best jump on and with their hands on each others shoulders slowly lock-step round the jumping men whilst the swaying boards throw them up and down with every other step. This is kept up for hours on end and is a survival of a head dance.

They are very artistic; most of their doors are ornamented with drawings as also are their bamboo pipes, combs etc. Singing is a special forte and some of their chorus songs are very fine and tuneful, quite unlike those of surrounding tribes. They are tatooed they say to act as lights when their eyes are closed in death.

Some Tagals have a story that the origin of Man was from Monkeys and that at one time the people of the world were all male monkeys. Others say that originally the Sun laid three eggs, one white which was a Murut, one green, a Tagal and one Red.

The first man on earth according to many Tagals was set to work making the holes for the rivers to run down. He had seven children, the youngest of whom was drowned in the Runi which was the first river made. Before the holes were made for the rivers, when it rained the water came right up and drove the people on to the top of Mt. Mulok and it was once whilst all the animals and people were up there for a long time that they ran short of food. The other animals talked together and decided to eat the dogs, who, understanding what they said, were very angry and rushed in and bit them and that is why to this day the dog hunts other animals.

When a man dies they put in his mouth a string of beads. The idea is that when he reaches the top of the world and entrance to the dead man's country, he finds it guarded by a snake who demands that a man shall look for its excrement and eat it before he can pass. When therefore the man reached this he bites the beads which make a noise and the snake is hoodwinked and allows them through.

Like other Bornean natives they believe in birds (omens) but many of them only for the first two days of a journey or of work. They blame women for the beginning of head-hunting and blood fueds and like certain other tribes many of the women will not eat deer's flesh as they believe it to be the reincarnation of dead men. Their houses are very strongly built and much more carefully erected than those of the surrounding Muruts. The most favored earring holes are series pierced right round the ears both for men and women.

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